



Pickens High School

500 Dragon Drive
Jasper, GA 30143

Phone: (706)253-1800 Fax: (706)253-1815

Principal: **Matt Combs**

Asst. Principal: Wendy Arnold
Asst. Principal: Rick Goble

Asst. Principal: Chris Williams
Asst. Principal: Brandon Tippens

Carissa Parker CTAE Director



Fall 2023

Dear Class of 2023 Seniors and Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We celebrate the accomplishments of your Pickens High School Senior! As your student gets ready to graduate and embark on postsecondary plans, please be advised of the following information and guidance.

Enclosed are your senior's:

- *2023-2024 Pickens High School Senior Status Check* - this form tracks your student's progress toward graduation.
- *Transcript* - this transcript reflects your student's grades and credits as of August 2023.
- *Student's Schedule* – this document shows what the student's schedule is for the entire 2023-24 school year.

Please be mindful of the following information for our 2024 Seniors:

- **Class of 2024 Senior and Parent Information Night** – This information session was held on Tuesday, 8/29, at 6pm in the PAC at PHS. If you were unable to attend, then please take the time to view the “Senior Presentation” accessible via the PHS Counseling webpage.
- **Senior Meetings** - Each school counselor will attempt to meet with all of our seniors this fall semester in person to go over our senior check-off list as well as to answer any questions about post-secondary plans.
- **Status Check Letters** - Listed on the attached status check form are the classes that your student must pass in order to both graduate on time and participate in the graduation ceremony at PHS in May of 2024.
- **Applying to College** - Each postsecondary school has its own set of requirements for admission. It is the student and family's responsibility to contact/research the school's admissions office to determine the admission requirements for the student's school of choice, including application deadlines for admission and financial aid, SAT/ACT requirements, recommendation letter requirements, etc. Students can apply to post-secondary schools directly through the college's website or by other means such as Common App. More information regarding this is available on the PHS Counseling Webpage.
- **GAFUTURES.ORG** - All seniors are expected to have a **gafutures.org** account to check their eligibility for financial aid, explore college and career information, and for postsecondary planning. **GA Futures is the entity that calculates all students' HOPE GPA's, not the student's school. Please note that a student's GA HOPE GPA and High School GPA are two different GPA's.** Information on how to create/access a student's GA Futures account is available via the PHS Counseling webpage. A student's HOPE GPA is one of the factors in deciding if a student qualifies for the HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship. To review all of the requirements for these grants/scholarships, then please visit **gafutures.org**.
- **Rigor Requirement for HOPE GPA** - One of the eligibility requirements for the HOPE Scholarship and Zell Miller Scholarship is the completion of four rigor courses. Please visit **gafutures.org** to view the full list of HOPE eligibility requirements, including HOPE rigor courses.
- **Social Security Number and GAFUTURES.ORG** - The student's Social Security Number is required for participation in the HOPE Scholarship Program. It is the student's and family's



Pickens High School

500 Dragon Drive
Jasper, GA 30143

Phone: (706)253-1800 Fax: (706)253-1815

Principal: Matt Combs

Asst. Principal: Wendy Arnold
Asst. Principal: Rick Goble

Asst. Principal: Chris Williams
Asst. Principal: Brandon Tippens

Carissa Parker CTAE Director



responsibility to have the Social Security Number added to the school's transcript as well as to the GA Futures profile correctly, and to verify its accuracy. **Omission or error may result in the student losing eligibility for the HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship.**

- **Transcript Requests** - Our PHS Counseling Secretary takes care of all transcript requests. Transcripts may be ordered by emailing: phstranscripts@pickenscountyschools.org with the student's full name, date of birth, expected graduation date, destination (college, military, employer, etc.) and method of delivery (GA Futures, USPS, email address, Common App, etc.). Directions on this process can be found on the PHS Counseling Webpage.
- **Requesting Where to Send Your Final Transcript in May 2024** - Please know that at the end of the school year, the PHS Counseling Team will send out a "Class of 2024 Final Transcript" Google form to all seniors. **All graduating seniors planning on attending a post-secondary school will need to have a copy of their final transcript sent to their school of choice.** To help smoothly and accurately send your final transcript to your school of choice, then the graduating senior will have to complete this form; otherwise, the PHS Counseling Team will not know where to send your final transcript to. Please know that final transcripts are not available until at least June 20, 2024, but no later than June 30th. Please know that after June 30th, you can log into your gafutures.org account to request a transcript to be sent to any school in the state of Georgia. This is the preferred method after graduation as this tends to be the fastest and most efficient way for schools in Georgia to receive your transcript.
- **Early Exit Senior Opportunity** - Seniors interested in being an "Early Exit Senior" (for eligible seniors who meet all graduation requirements by the end of Dec. 2023 and wish not to take classes in the Spring 2024 semester) will need to schedule a meeting in December with his/her school counselor. Both the student and parent must attend this meeting and sign the "Early Exit Senior" paperwork. Please know that early exit seniors are not allowed to participate in Spring sports or clubs, but can still have the choice to attend prom and walk at the May 2024 PHS Graduation. Please know that if you plan on attending college classes in the Spring of 2024 as a high school graduate, then the counselors recommend that students do not do the "early exit senior" option and instead attend classes through Dual Enrollment as final transcripts for the Fall 2023 semester will not be available in time in January to meet financial aid if you are enrolling as a high school graduate in January of 2024.
- **Information on Graduation** - All graduation instructions and information regarding graduation will be emailed to the Class of 2024 to their school Gmail accounts the first week of May. Graduation information will then made public via social media the first week of May.
- **Scholarships** - ALL local scholarships are listed on the PHS Counseling webpage. It is the student's responsibility to search these scholarship opportunities and apply for the ones that you feel you might qualify for. We encourage you to check the counseling webpage on a weekly basis to keep up with any new scholarship opportunities. Please know that local scholarships start becoming more available in January through May. The counseling team works diligently to ensure that all directions, documents, and deadlines are posted on the PHS Counseling webpage. Everything needed to apply for the scholarships listed are accessible via the webpage.
- **FAFSA** - The FAFSA is open for all students and their families (it will require both) to complete from October 1st - June 30th of each year; however, for one time only, the FAFSA will not be available until December 1st, 2023. This application must be completed for an individual to receive any form of financial aid (including the Pell Grant, HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship). Please know that this application is a Federal Application and is not related to PHS. If you have questions about your application and/or need assistance, then you will have to



Pickens High School

500 Dragon Drive
Jasper, GA 30143

Phone: (706)253-1800 Fax: (706)253-1815

Principal: Matt Combs

Asst. Principal: Wendy Arnold
Asst. Principal: Rick Goble

Asst. Principal: Chris Williams
Asst. Principal: Brandon Tippens

Carissa Parker CTAE Director



contact the Federal Student Aid Department of the US Department of Education. Ways to call and/or contact them virtually are accessible on their webpage studentaid.gov and/or you can reference the information provided in the PHS Senior Information Packet under the “FAFSA” section.

- **School Email** – Please check your school email on a daily basis. This is where you will receive information about all things related to graduation, senior pictures, yearbooks, cap & gown orders, etc.
- **Senior Information Packet** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download and review the Senior Information Packet. This packet contains useful information and resources for you and your family regarding your senior year and post-secondary planning.
- **Senior Information Sheet** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download a copy of this document, fill it out, and save a copy for yourself. The document is meant to be used in place of a resume and/or to help you build one as resumes are often required when applying for post-secondary schools, jobs, and/or scholarships. This document can also be given as a helpful tool to those who you ask to write you a reference/recommendation letter. **PLEASE KEEP YOUR ORIGINAL COPY AND THEN MAKE COPIES TO HAND OUT FOR APPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDERS.**
- **Senior Presentation** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download and review this incredibly resourceful presentation. Make sure to download this resource as a “power-point” presentation and not as “Google Slides.” If downloaded in “power-point” presentation mode, then you will be able to access the “microphone” icon in the lower right-hand corner of each slide and listen to the audio that accompanies each slide.
- **Senior Pictures** – Senior pictures are done through Cady Studios. Please visit home.cady.com/seniors/ to schedule your portrait session for your senior pictures. If you need any further assistance, then please call Cady Studios at 678-722-3449. Please know that in order for a senior to appear in the PHS yearbook, he/she must have a photo made with Cady Studios. Cady will be on campus on September 12th and October 24th to photograph seniors only. Seniors and/or their parents should schedule appointments for those days. Appointments may also be made on other dates; however, travel to Cady Studios will be necessary. Cady provides drapes for young ladies and tux tops for young gentlemen. Hair, make-up, and jewelry should be taken care of ahead of the appointment. A \$30 sitting fee is due at the time of photography for all seniors. This fee covers special processing for senior photos and touch-ups to photos when necessary.
- **Cap and Gown Orders** – Cap and gown orders are done through Jostens. A representative from Jostens will meet with the senior class during the school day on November 1st. After this date, seniors and their families will be able to place their cap & gown orders online. The link will be accessible via the PHS Counseling webpage.
- Seniors and their families have the following resources available to assist them in preparation for graduation and post-secondary options, including:
 - PHS Counseling Webpage (accessible by visiting the PHS webpage and then clicking on the “counseling” tab at the top of the webpage) and the PHS Counseling Department.
 - GAFutures.org

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions about graduation or post-secondary planning. We are very excited for each and every one of you!

PHS Counseling Department